

Index

News1-3
Opinion4
A&E5
Sports6-8
Classifieds8

The Alestle

Alton - East St. Louis - Edwardsville



**Cougar Theater
Company premieres
with 'Aesop's
Fables'
page 5**

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Recent weather amplifies e-Lert's procedure

BRIAN BERNIS
Alestle Reporter

Junior computer science major John Mullett of Breese was huddled in the basement of the Cougar Commons area on May 26 because the tornado warning sirens were going off.

Several minutes after the sirens went off, Mullet saw the e-Lert on his phone and could not help but laugh and shake his head.

"Looks like e-Lert is at it again," Mullet said.

Mullet said the e-Lert has been known by students to be less than timely informing students of the current weather situation.

"I think I would have better luck looking outside or try to find

the nearest computer to tell me what is going on," Mullet said.

Vice Chancellor for Administration Kenneth Neher said the e-Lert goes through a process. On May 26, a severe thunderstorm was in the area and police dispatchers decided it was necessary to send out an e-Lert.

"Once the severe thunderstorm warning was sent out, tornado spotters noticed a funnel cloud and decided to sound off the sirens and felt since the sirens were going off, there was no need to send another e-Lert," Neher said.

When there is a threat to the campus such as weather, a bomb threat or a hostile intruder, SIUE offers a several different ways for students to be informed about the

situation. An e-Lert is sent to the homepage of the SIUE website, each student and faculty's email and registered mobile device.

The alert service began in

on when an alert should go out is the same.

"When a situation arises and we feel the need for an e-Lert to be sent, the police dispatcher is the

message is out of the SIUE's hands.

"Once the button is pushed, the timing on which everybody receives the text message is based solely on the provider," Neher said. "It really depends on the carrier at any given time. Sometimes I've had them show up on my phone in two minutes or sometimes it takes 20 minutes."

Although Neher feels it is a good system, he admits there have been mistakes along the way.

"Last April, the wrong template was pressed and an e-Lert went out saying 'insert location here' and that was simply hitting the wrong button," Neher said.

Junior community health education major Courtney Mraz of

"[We] felt since the sirens were going off, there was no need to send another e-Lert."

- Kenneth Neher

Vice Chancellor of Administration

2008 to inform students, in 140 characters or less, of an emergency situation affecting campus.

Every situation is different in which an e-Lert is sent but the process in which the police decide

one who follows procedure and pushes the button that sends out a text message to cell phones and emails to the public," Neher said.

Once the message is sent, Neher said the delivery of the

e-Lert/pg.2



Photo by Michelle Beard/Alestle

Lonnie Patton's life has involved everything from serving his country to missionary work to photography. Patton's final day as a janitor in the MUC was May 26th after working at SIUE for a decade.

Hangin' up the keys

MUC janitor retires after decade of service

LEXI CORTES

Alestle Reporter

Lonnie Patton has been working at SIUE as a janitor for the past 3,650 days. He said his tearful goodbyes on his last day before retirement, May 25. He wished one student worker "lots of luck in the future" as he walked out the door. He often calls the staff and students his "second family."

Patton, 62, grew up on a farm with his family in Bunker Hill, the town he resides in to this day. Straight out of high school, Patton found himself in the workforce and he hasn't stopped working since. He has been at it for 40 years.

He got a job at Olin Powder Mill, Winchester division where he made explosives and worked with nitroglycerin for a year. Then he joined the Air Force in 1968, during the Vietnam era. He and his wife, Vicki, lived in Austin, Texas, where he was stationed. Patton served in active duty for four years and in the reserves for six and received honorable discharge.

After leaving the military, he worked at a factory called Alton Box Board Company, which later merged with Jefferson Smurfit, and began downsizing and restructuring until the factory was eventually closed down. After 26.5 years of working at this factory, Patton found himself unemployed at the age of 50.

He then found a job at Lake Williamson Christian Center in Carlinville where he worked as supervisor over custodians. From there, Patton moved on to work at a lumberyard where he was in charge of maintenance over the trucks and the crew that installed insulation. In 2001, when that was no working out, he heard about an opening at SIUE.

"It's a good place to work and [there are] a lot of good people. I enjoy working with all the

students...I call them kids, [because] they're like my kids," Patton said.

Patton has decided to retire after 10 years because of his back issues.

"I'm never gonna get any better, I'm only gonna get worse," said Patton.

He injured his back in 2004 when he slipped on an icy parking lot on campus and was assigned lighter duty because SIUE did not want to lose Patton.

"That put a limit onto my activities," Patton said. "I've got nine vertebrae out and I had eight bulging disks until they took [one] out in May, and fused my neck. A lot of things I enjoyed doing, I couldn't do anymore."

Everything from work to his favorite hobbies have become more difficult.

Throughout his 40 years in the workforce, Patton has held a number of hobbies including treasure-hunting, photography and missionary work.

Patton also enjoys photography, calling it one of his joys.

"I've done photography ever since I got out of high school," Patton said, "[but] I'm not up on the new digital age."

Patton has photographed everything from beauty contests to nature and countless weddings in his lifetime until he had to give up photography as a hobby as well.

"My eyes started messing up on me, so that took care of the photography," said Patton.

Another one of his joys, as Patton puts it, is being Vice President of the Gideon's International, a Christian organization.

"You know when you go to the hotels and motels and you open up the drawer and you see the Gideon Bible in there?" said Patton, "That's what we do; we're like missionaries and we're in 192 countries so we get the word out."

PATTON/pg.2

e-Lert from pg.1

Manteno feels it is better to have something in place than nothing.

"Even though it was bogus [and] they sent out an alert with just the template, I think it's a good system because usually I am not near a computer to find out what is going on," Mraz said.

Recently, another school could not afford to hit the wrong button.

On April 27, a tornado tore through the University of Alabama's home city of Tuscaloosa, causing the school to cancel the rest of the semester, right as the university was heading into finals week.

Andy Rainey, University of Alabama's director of Web Communications, is in charge of sending out Alabama's "UA Alerts." Rainey is the final say in making sure the information that was being sent out was accurate after a team of advisors assess the weather situation.

"We have seven to eight different ways we get the word out to the public and I imagine many universities use many different channels to inform the public," Rainey said.

Rainey and Neher agreed when it came to cell phones; carriers are in charge of when people receive the texts.

"That is why we have several outlets for people to receive information," Rainey said. "One outlet is not always reliable, where other outlets we can control when people receive the message."

Neher said one challenge for people who decide when to send

out alerts is predicting Mother Nature.

"We watch what the National Weather Service says and it really depends on the situation," Neher said. "You sometimes walk a fine line because you want to send out an alert that is going to directly affect campus."

Rainey said the weather in the South is a little more structured,



Photo by Michelle Beard/Alestle

but that does not make them immune to possible tragedy.

"Luckily the weather here is predictable, so we know what is going to happen, but you have to treat every situation different because you never [know] what may or may not happen," Rainey said.

UA Alert functions much like an e-Lert by informing the public

of an emergency, but recently the UA Alert had to do something it has never done.

On April 27 and the days following the EF-5 tornado that killed dozens of U of A students, approximately 15 UA Alerts were sent out to inform the public of important information.

"Even after the storm we sent out information through the UA Alert to the students and faculty involving temporary housing and other information to where people could go for help," Rainey said. "This is definitely a special circumstance where we send out texts that are more than just weather alerts."

SIUE Police Captain Tony Bennett said in an emergency like what Alabama experienced, SIUE would not use the e-Lert to inform the public of basic information.

"What we would do is use the press or email to inform the public of temporary housing or canceling the semester like in Alabama's case," Bennett said.

Both Neher and Rainey said the alert business can be tricky, but feel the universities do a good job in telling the students what is going on.

"We have felt very good about the system ever since we acquired it and think we are able to inform students and faculty properly about events that might affect campus," Neher said.

Brian Berns can be reached at bberns@alestlelive.com or 650-3527.

PATTON from pg.1

Patton also serves as deacon at his christian church, Woodburn Bible Church. He is currently serving his fourth term.

Trish Saelens, associate director of the University Center Advisory Board calls him "quite the storyteller."

"He is a special guy and he has served the department well and everybody who walks through here gets a smile," Saelens said. "He's just a good man. Everybody knows who he is. Everybody knows how hard he works."

Saelens thought back to when she first met Patton six years ago.

"I got the impression that he was very easy-going, but that really translated later on for me to be someone who was really committed to the building and who would really do anything for anybody," Saelens said. "He didn't take the job lightly, he had a bright perspective on the job and how he was serving the students in this building."

MUC Building Service supervisor Dave Danks agreed that Patton has been devoted to the building.

"I have 16 full time civil service employees and if I had sixteen Lonnie's, I would have no problems."

Saelens and Danks both agree the student workers love spending time with Patton.

"They request to work with him," Danks said.

Civil engineering graduate student, Ramya Abhishetti, from India said when Patton would come in to work with her those

were the best hours of the day.

"I'll definitely miss working with him. He was like family," Abhishetti said.

As for his plans for retirement plans, he will be traveling with his wife, Vicki, or as he calls her "the little wifey," has decided to retire May 27. She worked at a daycare near their home in Bunker Hill where Patton has come dressed as Santa for 20 years.

They have plans to go on a big trip for retirement, traveling around the northern states, including at stop in Santa Claus, Indiana.

"We're going go see the country and try to enjoy life while we can," Patton said. "I guess [when] we get tired of runnin', we'll sit there and look at each other."

"Lonnie-isms"

Danks said the staff has a list of phrases called "Lonnie-isms," which are funny things Patton is often heard saying:

"I've been working my posterior off."

"I'm overworked, underpaid, underloved, underfed."

"I'm starvin'; I'm wastin' away to nothin'."

Lexi Cortes can be reached at acortes@alestlelive.com or 650-3527.

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Former engineering students pedal their way to post-graduate success

BRIAN BERNIS
Alestle Reporter

Imagine riding a bicycle around the Eiffel Tower, Stonehenge or the Great Wall of China from the comfort of your own home or gym.

Three recent SIUE graduates created a stationary bike system that allows you to bike anywhere in the world using Google 3D Earth.

Engineering majors Brian Derrow of Gurnee, Taylor Hook of Effingham and Corey Akers of Geneseo, who have been classmates for four years, thought they should do their senior project together.

"These were guys I've worked closely with in my labs and classes and I knew these were guys who were focused and had the right mindset," Derrow said.

Once it was time to figure out what they were going to build for their senior project, many ideas were considered.

"We wanted something everybody could use," Hook said. "We did not want something you need an engineering degree to understand so we came up with roughly 50 ideas before we came up with our final project."

Derrow said the team came up with something everybody understands.

"Being at the gym can be a boring thing. We have all been there where we work out but we are bored with what we are doing," Derrow said. "Running

on a treadmill or elliptical can be boring staring at a wall or TV that has closed captioning you can't read anyways."

What the team came up with is a box that plugs into a TV or computer screen and with the use of a couple sensors installed in the box, a

against and in our kit you can compete against your friends in the gym that are right next to you or you can compete against someone who is in another state and "Ex" means exercise," Derrow said.

Once the team went to work and created a prototype, they

he would be normally on a bike or at the gym," Derrow said.

After several tests the team decided they found their senior project.

They had to keep a weekly log for what they came up with and different challenges their kit provided.

Some of the challenges were technical issues, like making the sensors respond to movement.

"Along with the reports, we had to give a mid-term and final presentation showing our progress," Hook said.

The last month of school the kit was tested out in the Student Fitness Center and the team said that was a huge part of knowing what works and what does not work.

"In the end, if we were not able test out the kit like we did in Student Fitness Center, who knows where we would be," Darrow said.

Derrow said presenting the idea at SIUE helped them tremendously.

"As cheesy as it sounds, being able to go up to the director of the Student Fitness Center and ask if they can try their product in the fitness center is the power of e," Derrow said. "If we tried to do this at Purdue or any other school like that, the director would probably tell us to come back when the product is finished and in circulation."

Director of Campus Recreation Mick Ostrander was more than willing to help the guys

out.

"In the end, this place is called the Student Fitness Center and our goal is to help students graduate through the tool of recreation and we were more than happy to help the guys out," Ostrander said.

Posters were posted around the fitness center advertising DuelEX and asked students to give feedback.

Darrow and Ostrander said one of the great things about SIUE is the multi-departmental collaboration, meaning a biology major could walk in to an English teacher's office and propose a project that involves both majors.

"That is one of the great things about this school," Ostrander said. "Everyone is willing to help the student."

The team wants to market their project starting in August and the price for the kit will be roughly \$100.

"This is not something we want to cost as much as a treadmill, but something that can be put in schools and houses," Derrow said.

The team has received rave reviews from peers and teachers and they have high hopes for the future of their product.

"We want to accomplish what Facebook did in five years in the social media world and do the same thing in the fitness world," Derrow said.

Brian Bernis can be reached at bberns@alestlelive.com or 650-3527.



Photo courtesy of Corey Akers

(Left to right) Corey Akers, Brian Derrow and Taylor Hook hope to cash in on their senior project.

exercise machine and Google 3D Earth. You can bike through Disney World or ride through SIUE's campus.

The team calls their contraption "DuelEX."

"Duel means to compete

tested what they had come up with.

"We had a guy try it and after talking with him as he was working out he would tell us how he was feeling and after he was done he said he was not bored like



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Hot-spot policing keeps crime down despite cuts

Tough safety decisions have become commonplace the last few years, resulting in hiring freezes or laying off police officers.

St. Clair County laid off county deputies who demanded higher wages earlier this year, though the deputies were later rehired. One could infer that these recent police budget cuts would cause crime rates to spike across the United States.

However, the FBI



Nolan Sharkey
Guest Columnist

announced last week that violent crimes this year in the U.S. have fallen to a 40-year low. The FBI reported in 2009 that crimes dropped 10 percent in metropolitan areas, such as Chicago, and property crimes dropped 8 percent nationally.

So why has America not seen a spike in crime with recent layoffs and hiring freezes in police stations? I believe innovative police strategies have given officers the upper hand in the war against crime. Hot-spot policing is an innovative police strategy that uses past crime data to present logical guesses on where certain crimes will occur and at what time of the day. Computers draw maps and pinpoint

what precincts and what times police chiefs should send their units to patrol.

This data mining approach saves police departments from hiring more officers and patrolling everywhere is not plausible, which, in turn, keeps property taxes and property insurance low.

These progressive ideas are being passed along by schools such as SIUE, who educate computer management and information systems majors to use relevant data to be sustainable and save resources while keeping America safe.

The Wall Street Journal ran an article this past weekend by criminologist Dr. James Wilson titled "Hard Times, Fewer Crimes." The article reviewed the observation first formulated by Nobel Prize winning economist Gary Becker, who demonstrated that during rough economic times, citizens resort to illegal activity due to a lack of employment to bring required revenue. Criminologists typically associate a 2 percent increase in property crimes when unemployment increases by 1 percent.

Wilson theorized a wide range of ideas for why recent budget cuts and a deep recession have not followed this prior line of reasoning. His hypothesis included reasons such as an increase in prison time for convicted felons, regulation on the use of lead (which is believed to lead to violence when an individual is

exposed to it for long periods of time) and lower use of crack or cocaine in America.

Other criminologists and sociologists have theorized crime rates have been constantly declining due to a greater number of policemen, stronger gun control laws, increase in drug education among children and the legalization of abortion. All of these efforts combined have arguably helped control crime rates that have continuously dropped since 1989, but they all have their critics and drawbacks.

However, innovative police strategies in combination with the several listed hypothesis above have helped stop crimes before they can happen. Wilson's article refers to criminologists Lawrence Sherman and David Weisburd, who studied 7,000 police patrols in Minneapolis's hot-spots and found that for every minute a police officer spent at a hotspot, the length of time after the officer left without a crime was fifteen minutes.

As long as this does not lead to racial profiling, I highly encourage this new-age policing. It cost a lot of money for police cars to patrol the city, but advanced innovative police concepts, such as hot-spot patrolling, enables agencies to save gas and be where they are needed before a crime can even occur.

Nolan Sharkey can be reached at nsbarke@siue.edu

Westboro's evil brings out the best in Americans

Westboro Baptist Church is at it again.

On May 25, a news release from the church praised that 125 people died in the May 22 F5 tornado in Joplin, Mo., because of Missouri's tolerance of homosexuality. Because of that, Westboro planned to protest a memorial ceremony held for the victims. After reading the newsletter several times to understand where the church was coming from, I cringed a little more each time.



Brian Berns
Reporter

Americans paid tribute this Memorial Day weekend to those who gave them the freedom of religion and freedom of speech. Having these two freedoms is a beautiful thing, but this past weekend Westboro planned on abusing the two freedoms that help make our country great.

Donations from all across the country have poured in to the beleaguered city and President Barack Obama visited to pay his respects and promised to rebuild the town. Westboro, however, tried to put a dent in the cities recovery.

The Westboro Baptist Church, based out of Topeka, Kan., is not what you would think of as a church. The church condemns gays and their supporters and is best known for picketing soldier's funerals, protesting that the soldiers are committing crimes by protecting a nation that does not think homosexuals are evil, and other assorted political messages.

The church recently had a couple members protest a soldier's funeral in Bethalto and has visited 800 cities protesting with signs saying, "God hates America" and other politically charged phrases.

When Bethalto heard of this "church" coming to town, a Facebook group was created to have a counter protest so the group could not see the funeral.

The same action was taken for the Joplin memorial where 16,000 people joined the page.

The end result was people gathering with their motorcycles and trucks to block potential Westboro protestors. These people showed the strength American people could have.

Obama came to give his blessing and the ceremony went on as only one man, not represented by Westboro, made any noise that was not supportive of Joplin. He was promptly run out of town.

There were no confirmed members of the church by the media, but according to comments left on different online articles, there were some members of the group that were promptly shown the way out of the city.

Some people claimed Westboro did not need to show up to Joplin because the mere threat of showing up garnered national attention. The Joplin newspaper even had them on their front page.

Maybe writing this opinion piece is giving them attention and prompting someone to look at their website and see what they believe in.

Reporting on any negative organization can be seen as publicity but I think the media does a good job depicting these types of organizations as accurately as possible.

The freedom of speech and religion showed its dark side, but in the end, what makes America a beautiful place to live are the people who band together for the right reasons and exemplify why there is no place for hatred in our country.

Brian Berns is a senior mass communications major from Springfield. He can be reached at bberns@alestlelive.com or 650-3527.

Xfest returns, continues to push boundaries

LEXI CORTES

Alestle Reporter

Xfest, the theater and dance department's summer showcase for experimental theater, is back for the second time as Xfest 2.0, and promises not to disappoint with its alternative spin on traditional theater.

Xfest 2.0 will feature five performances, including two never before seen premieres, a featured keynote speaker and family friendly shows and workshops.

Theater and dance professor and artistic director of Xfest Chuck Harper said the audience should prepare themselves to be surprised with Xfest 2.0 performances.

"I think [audience members] can expect to be surprised by something that will entertain them and have their preconceived expectations pleasantly broken," Harper said.

The goal of Xfest is to present the campus and community with local and national experimental theater productions. Harper said he does not want people to be nervous or skeptical coming into these shows.

"We worked really hard to bring in companies that people will like," Harper said. "People

should not be scared by the word experimental. If they take a chance, they might actually like it."

The difference between experimental and traditional theater is that the performances are not story-based. The actors are experimenting with how they tell a story. Sometimes they blur the line between theater and dance, Harper said.

Peter Cocuzza, theater and dance professor and executive producer of Xfest 2.0, gave away a few hints about the upcoming performances.

"Content will be varied and alternative, at the same time it will be accessible," Cocuzza said.

The first performance of Xfest 2.0 is June 1 at 7:30 p.m. in the Metcalf Theater. Jeremy Sher of Chicago, a former SIUE theater and dance instructor, will be performing in "CROW"

"CROW" is the true story of Don Crowhurst, a British inventor who tried to circumnavigate the globe in 1969, but went insane along the journey.

"I'm excited about 'CROW' because I know Jeremy," Harper said. "For 10 years we've been talking about making this show happen."

June 2 at 7:30 p.m. in the

CROW

June 1, 7:30 p.m.
Metcalf Theater

52 Pickup

June 2, 7:30 p.m.
Metcalf Theater

In Retrospect

June 3, 7:30 p.m.
Metcalf Theater

Metcalf Theater, theater simple, a traveling theater company from Seattle, will perform "52 Pickup." They have put together a 75-minute performance of acting, chance and emotion.

At the start of the show they throw a deck of cards into the air. The cards represent 52 scenes from a relationship. Throughout the performance, actors will pick up a card and act out whatever is

This is Not Funny

June 4, 4:00 p.m.
Metcalf Theater

500 Clown Frankenstein

June 4, 7:30 p.m.
Dunham Hall Theater

for more information go to
siue.edu/xfest

Graphic courtesy of siue.edu/xfest

written on it. Because of the element of chance, no two shows are ever the same, Harper said.

Loco7 of New York City will perform "In Retrospect" June 3 at 7:30 p.m. in the Metcalf Theater. With the use of giant puppets, marionette scenery, masks, choreography, acrobatics and live original music and video, Loco7 explores how we construct our personal memory box.

June 4 at 4 p.m. in the Metcalf Theater, theater class 310b, which consists of SIUE alumni, faculty, and students, will perform "This is Not Funny." The performance was originally created for a workshop exercise in last year's Xfest.

"They had a week to make it and it was only ten minutes [long]," Harper said.

The actors of theater 310b explore the line between childhood innocence and a jaded adulthood using balloons, poetry and real-life newscasts.

500 Clown of Chicago will be presented Saturday, June 4 at 7:30 p.m. in Dunham Hall Theater. Harper said the show was chosen by Arts and Issues to be the headliner for Xfest 2.0.

Grant Andree, assistant director of development for Arts and Issues, commended 500 Clown.

"They are an excellent theater company and they've been getting a lot of attention for their unique theater, so I thought they'd be perfect for Xfest. Improvisation and comedy is their forte," Andree said.

Their performance is called "500 Clown Frankenstein." The

XFEST/pg.8

Children grab spotlight in company debut

Cougar Theater Company explores the world of Aesop's Fables

COURTNEY HILL

Alestle Reporter

Joy, humor and wisdom abound in the Cougar Theater Company's rendition of James Brock's "Aesop's Fables."

The play, which opened May 28 at the Metcalf Theater, featured a myriad of charming characters in a small performance space that places audience members in the midst of the fable atmosphere.

CTC, founded in 2011, is SIUE's newest production organization and provides plays written specifically for children and teens. Wendy Greenwood, artistic director for "Aesop's Fables" and SIUE alumna, emphasized the importance of theater for young audiences.

"It's entertainment, but it's also educational," Greenwood said. "It's important to let them know what theater is, and it introduces them to it. It builds a connection to theater for them at a really young age."

Theater and dance professor Peter Cocuzza said CTC is a great

opportunity for SIUE students to explore performing for a variety of audiences.

"For our students, it's a chance to perform shows for children, which we don't typically do," Cocuzza said.

"Aesop's Fables," which served as CTC's debut production, exemplified the educational component through its legendary morals. In a matter of 45 minutes, audience members were reminded of the classic Aesop tales, "The Fox and the Crow," "The Donkey in the Lion's Skin," "The Fox and the Sour Grapes" and "The Tortoise and the Hare."

Although fast-paced, stories were spun through a multi-theatrical context, where actors transformed into several fable characters from a main theme of core characters. The play allowed for the character Aesop to interject his own fables, at times to provide the morals, adding extra flair to the storyline while helping children understand the importance of being upstanding,



Photo by Derrick Hawkins/Alestle

Cougar Theater Company, which has performers of all ages, delighted the audience with their rendition of the classic "Aesop's Fables" in the Metcalf Theater.

caring individuals.

The dialogue was appropriate for the young audience, although some ad-libbing catered specifically to adults.

Cheryl Connelly of Oakley, Calif., watched the performance and said creating humor that could be accepted by children and adults is no easy task.

"It was entertaining enough

for adults as well as entertaining for the children, and that is very hard to accomplish in theater," Connelly said. "There was enough humor in it for every age. I thought it was perfect. With the old man [Aesop], I was laughing my tail off through the whole thing."

Because of the story's multi-theatrical roots, audience

members were treated to an interactive environment, where the characters posed questions and expected answers from children and adults alike.

The age of the actors ranged from seventh graders to college seniors and the group brought "Aesop's Fables" to life and created a diverse atmosphere.

CTC/pg.8

Johnson awaits new challenges as coach

The past has paved the way for future success in the OVC

Editor's note: This is part two in a two-part series on new volleyball Head Coach Leah Johnson.

ALLAN LEWIS
Alestle Sports Editor

The photos on volleyball Head Coach Leah Johnson's wall serve as a reminder of the past.

Volleyball

"Just out of respect and to get a sense for the program, I kept all of the pictures [former coach Todd Gober] left because that was my connection to the program, to the history and tradition he built here," Johnson said.

The Cougars play a full Ohio Valley Conference schedule next year as they continue making the four-year transition to NCAA Division I. The first three years under former Head Coach Todd Gober were not easy, and the photos Gober left in his former office, now occupied by Johnson, share some insight into how far

"That was my connection to the program, to the history and tradition [former coach Todd Gober] built..."

-Leah Johnson
Head Volleyball Coach



Photo by Rebehka Blake/Alestle

Leah Johnson is the fourth coach in SIUE volleyball history. Johnson comes to SIUE after serving a year as a volunteer assistant coach at Notre Dame. Johnson also coached at her Alma-mater Missouri State and at Texas Pan-American where she was a graduate assistant.

the program has come in such a short time.

Gober left SIUE as the program's winningest coach in January, but his teams during the Division I era had their ups and downs.

Gober's 2009 team went just 2-27 after a promising 13-14 campaign in 2008 led by current Assistant Coach Mallory Clements, who was then an outside hitter for the Cougars.

Johnson's connection to the program is a little more than a few pictures now, after being selected

as its head coach from a pool of four finalists including Steve Florio, Steve Hendricks and Heather Collins.

That's when Johnson's competitive drive went into motion.

"I was fortunate to be in a group with several strong candidates, some of which I knew personally, but when your competitive nature sets in, you need to find a way to distinguish yourself," Johnson said. "All of those coaches in the final four were incredible coaches and

incredible people, but in this situation I feel like this is a great fit for myself personally and a great fit for the university."

Gober, whom Johnson met in 2009 when the Cougars traveled to one of her previous coaching stops and alma mater Missouri State, has been willing to help along the way.

"He wished me luck and wished me good training and health with the team and extended an open invitation for help if I ever needed anything," Johnson said. "I called him at

home one day and he was mowing his lawn. He is always willing to help."

As with any first-year coaching job in collegiate sports, it will take some time through recruiting for Johnson to leave her mark on the program with her own players. For now, Johnson has a roster full of Gober's recruits, including next year's signees Chelsi Hummert and Emma Anderson.

"We have a few recruits who were already signed and I haven't seen them play yet," Johnson said. "The summer is an opportunity to see what we have coming in because I have no clue."

Johnson has seen the rest of her team though, and on the first day of practice, she immediately took the team to her liking.

"I just wanted to see them compete," Johnson said about her first day practicing with the Cougars. "I didn't want to spend a lot of time teaching, I just wanted to see them compete and execute the game in a game situation."

Johnson said the Cougars were nervous with a new coach calling the shots.

"That tells me they are eager," Johnson said. "Once they calmed down [and] I made it clear to them [that] 'Hey, you guys have my trust. I am already your

JOHNSON/pg. 8

SIUE making strides in NCAA Academic Progress Rate

ALLAN LEWIS
Alestle Sports Editor

The latest NCAA Academic Progress Report (APR) scores are in, and SIUE remains in good shape.

Athletics

SIUE has been subject to the APR, which reflects the retention and eligibility rates of Division I institutions for two seasons now, with the latest numbers focusing on the 2009-2010 academic year released May 24.

The numbers posted by SIUE reflect well upon the national average, as improvement has been seen throughout Division I.

SIUE had nine of its 18 teams post perfect scores of 1,000, including men's basketball, which scored just a 906 in the last report.

Schools are subject to NCAA penalties, including postseason bans and scholarship reductions if its four-year average is less than 925. The 1,000 brings the men's basketball team's APR average to 952 after two seasons.

That is still above the national average for public institutions, which is 937.

Men's and women's golf, men's cross country, men's indoor and outdoor track, women's soccer, softball and women's tennis also had scores of 1,000 on this year's APR.

Jaci Declue, the Assistant Director of Athletics

in compliance and student services at SIUE said the latest numbers reflect well of SIUE student-athletes in the classroom.

"I'm really happy with the results," Declue said. "All of our teams are in good standing and we are bringing in quality student-athletes who have the drive to succeed not only on the courts and fields. We are retaining our athletes and keeping them eligible."

Through two years of collective data, none of SIUE's teams fall under 925, which would bring with it serious consequences, not something SIUE would like to deal with during its Division I infancy.

There is always room for improvement though, according to Declue.

Women's cross country scored a 909, but was perfect last season, putting its multiyear APR at 960.

"While we don't like to see a team dip below 925, it puts it on our radar," Declue said. "The chancellor and [Director of Athletics Brad] Hewitt have been very direct in saying a team's success in the classroom is more important than the team's success."

Overall, SIUE has been strong in the classroom, completing its 10th straight semester with a collective student-athlete cumulative GPA over 3.0.

"That shows a lot of commitment," Declue said.

The APR numbers are more difficult for a

APR/pg. 7

2009-2010 NCAA APR perfect scores

Men's Basketball
Men's Golf
Men's Indoor Track
Men's Outdoor Track
Women's Golf
Women's Soccer
Women's Tennis
Softball

NCAA

Graphic by Michelle Beard/Alestle

Cougars find height, depth in-state

Capotosto and Warford round out recruiting class

ALLAN LEWIS

Alestle Sports Editor

With one Raven already on its roster, the SIUE women's basketball team added another as it attempts to add depth for its first season playing a full Ohio Valley Conference schedule.

Women's basketball

Head Coach Amanda Levens recently completed her 2011 recruiting class with the addition of Ashley Capotosto (Des Plaines) and Raven Warford (Chicago).

The duo completes the Cougar roster for next season, including in-state recruits Katie Hempen (Highland) and Tierny Austin (Rockford), who signed National Letters of Intent in November.

Levens said recruiting locally will help the program build its reputation and improve upon last year's 11-19 season, which marked progress during the school's transition to NCAA Division I.

"I feel like everyone we signed will help us," Levens said. "When we are recruiting, we start with a large pool and dwindle down and find people who fit our philosophy. Getting local players gets the word out and builds our fan base. We like to keep local players [close to] home."

Levens said her 2011 recruiting class fills some big holes and will create some interesting position battles as the season, still six months away, draws closer.

"We start from scratch on day one," Levens said. "Whoever earns it is going to play. Last year is over, and if you started last year, you will have to compete for those minutes."

Warford is one of those players who figures to fight for playing time as a freshman, and at 6-foot-5, her height will be an advantage in the OVC.

Warford's dominating demeanor in the paint comes as a surprise, because she has played just three seasons of competitive basketball in her young life.

"Her height is unique to the OVC because there was one player above 6'3" in the conference last season," Levens said. "She has a huge upside and hasn't played a ton of basketball, so her best is ahead of her still."

Warford's size in the post, along with soon-to-be junior, 6-foot-one Raven Berry, who led SIUE in rebounds the past two seasons and points her freshmen year, figures to create headaches in the conference.

"We are pretty good at developing players as long as they stay committed to improving," Levens said.

Capotosto comes to the Cougars as a Division I transfer from St. Bonaventure, meaning she will have to sit



Photo by Michelle Beard/Alestle
Head Coach Amanda Levens, Raven Berry and the SIUE women's basketball team will be joined by Ashley Capotosto, Raven Warford, Katie Hempen and Tierny Austin next season. The Cougars were 11-19 in 2010-2011.

out the 2011-2012 season as a requirement of her transfer.

The mandatory redshirt year the NCAA requires does not steer Levens from scooping up transfer players. She has now recruited three in her tenure with the Cougars, including Whitney Champlin from Oregon State, who wrapped up her career at SIUE last season and Kiara Konnor, a transfer from Binghamton who makes her way onto the Cougar roster this year.

Capotosto earned some interest from the Cougars out of high school and remembered SIUE after taking a different route.

"Getting transfers is about relationships, and you have to get in on them early," Levens said. "Ashley [Capotosto] remembered us when she decided she wanted to leave there [Binghamton]."

Levens said there is no reason to believe Capotosto or any other transfer can not succeed in a new environment.

"Some people have a view of transfers, whether it is positive or negative, and there are a variety of reasons a player has for transferring," Levens said. "You can have a great career somewhere else if it is a better fit, and it is all about how you use your redshirt year."

The redshirt year will be valuable to Capotosto, who saw limited time on the floor at St. Bonaventure, playing just 26 total minutes as a freshman. Her high school numbers indicate a high ceiling as Capotosto scored 1,947 points and had 1,118 rebounds during her prep career at Elk Grove High School.

"She's extremely tough and has a great motor in terms of her energy level," Levens said. "I can't explain how tough she is in practice, but she will be a workhorse and

spend the upcoming year fine-tuning things."

The early additions to the Cougar roster also bring promise.

Austin, a 5-foot-10 forward, put up impressive numbers at Auburn High School in Rockford, averaging 21.7 points, 9.3 rebounds and six steals per game during her final high school season. Her play was good enough to make her the Athlete of the Year in Rockford.

"She is an extremely athletic wing player and her length is not something we have had since I have been here," Levens said. "She can be incredible and definitely score the basketball."

The road to SIUE is a little shorter for Hempen. Hempen averaged 14.8 points and 3.1 steals for the Highland Bulldogs last year.

"She is a winner and will come in and play multiple positions," Levens said. "She will put her nose in there and take charges and give her body up for position and has some of those intangibles."

How the Cougars build for November is not up to Levens during the summer, because the team is not allowed to practice until October. Still, Levens hopes her team is working towards its goal of competing in the OVC.

"This summer and off-season [are] huge for our team," Levens said. "Our team is as good as how hard we work. We have five upperclassmen this season and they have each been here for a year or two and hopefully their leadership will translate into us playing better."

Allan Lewis can be reached at alewis@alestlelive.com or 650-3524.

APR

from pg. 6

school like SIUE to achieve because retention plays an important role in the equation. During the transition to Division I, DeClue said some student-athletes are not fully committed or educated on the process. The 2008-2009 men's basketball numbers was one instance where it stood out.

"We had four kids who left the institution [Brandon Dunson, Terrance Williams, Barry Wellington and Aaron Garriott,]" DeClue said. "Maybe they were not up for the transition at that

point, but as we near the end and recruit athletes who understand you won't see students leaving this institution."

Of the 6,410 Division I programs adhering to the APR, less than 5 percent fell below 925 during a four-year period of data. Of the teams penalized this year, more than half (59 of 103) are men's basketball, baseball or football teams.

SIUE men's basketball Head Coach Lennox Forrester was unavailable for comment as of Tuesday afternoon.

Allan Lewis can be reached at alewis@alestlelive.com or 650-3524.

SPORTS *in brief*

Two players have signed National Letters of Intent to play baseball at SIUE.

Associate Head Coach Tony Stoecklin announced Tuesday the Cougars have added Skyler Geissinger (Overland Park, Kan.) and Drew Staples (Auburn, Wash.)

Geissinger, 6-2, 180 lbs., comes to SIUE from Blue Valley West High School, where he also played football. He is primarily an infielder who may also see time in the outfield.

Staples, 6-4, 230 lbs., is a left-handed pitcher transferring to SIUE from Pierce College in Washington, and is projected to be in the starting rotation for the Cougars. Staples spent the 2009 season at Treasure Valley Community College in Oregon.

A standout volleyball player and the long-time NCAA Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR) were

inducted into the Great Lakes Valley Conference (GLVC) Hall of Fame Tuesday.

Michelle Cox and Dr. John Meisel were honored by the Cougars former Division II conference last week.

Cox (Gilman) was a four-year letter winner for the Cougars' and a member of the inaugural 1995 SIUE volleyball team. She set and still holds numerous records for the Cougars, including kills (1,897), attack attempts (4,432), sets played (491), points (2,594.5), points per set (5.28), blocks (756), and blocks per set (1.54).

Meisel has served as the Faculty Athletics Representative at SIUE since 1986 and was the GLVC's President from 2005 to 2007, the GLVC Treasurer from 2000 to 2005, and as a member of the GLVC Executive Committee. In his role as the FAR, it was Meisel's duty to cast institutional votes on league policies and procedures.



Photo by Michelle Beard/Alestle

Sophomore Sammi Minton and Freshman Kelsey Augustine, shown blocking against Southeast Missouri State last season are among the players new Head Coach Leah Johnson will be working with at SIUE. The Cougars were 14-15 last season.

JOHNSON

from pg. 6

biggest fan,' then, they went to the next level."

Fortunately for Johnson, her team already has chemistry, which plays a critical role in volleyball.

"I held individual meetings with each player and one of the common themes on the player perspectives I had them fill out was 'what is your biggest advantage?' And they said their chemistry," Johnson said. "They want to see each other succeed in every aspect."

That chemistry applies to athletics and academics.

"We had an academic awards banquet and we had five student athletes receiving awards on a 10 member team," Johnson said. "They were genuinely excited for each other and that's what I like about this team."

Johnson is already thinking of ways to improve the Cougars for the future. Just days into her tenure as head coach, Johnson was already hitting the recruiting trail.

"Now, it's just bringing in people to complement what is already there. We need to improve skill-wise with our ball control and team defense," Johnson said. "I think they work hard and that gives you the ability to be a very scrappy team, and I want it to look as easy and clean as possible. Scrappy and exciting isn't the kind of volleyball I want to play."

Luckily for Johnson, traveling is one of her favorite off-the-job hobbies, and as a head coach, it becomes increasingly relevant with recruiting, something she was doing for SIUE just days on the job.

"Recruiting is fun because it takes you several places and you get to know the club and high school coaches and how they motivate and teach their players," Johnson said. "I already have several trips planned to Kansas City, Chicago, Indianapolis and Louisville, so I really enjoy it."

Traveling has always been a hobby of Johnson's.

"I studied Spanish and German and got my Master's in international affairs, so if I can find myself on any country or continent, I probably will. That is my second passion next to athletics," Johnson said. "I will probably be spending most of my time recruiting, and while that falls into my job priority, I will love it."

Johnson said she realizes recruiting is about the athletes, though.

"The most important thing is that we are recruiting the right students, not just a student," Johnson said. "We are looking for students who will represent the 'e community' in the classroom and community. It should be a priority, and it is doable. I want to bring the right people first and the right athlete second."

With those athletes, Johnson's goal is to build a championship program at SIUE.

"We are just going to keep moving forward in our first year and are going to get a good feel for the conference and win the games we should be winning... Down the road in the next three years I would like to see us compete for a conference championship," Johnson said. "We want to be peaking each season to where at the end we are ready to roll for postseason play in the NCAA [tournament]."

For the Cougars to be at this point, where a championship seems reasonable within three years, Johnson realizes her players have been through times when it has simply been out of the question, no matter how good the Cougars could have been.

"I have a lot of respect for these student-athletes who chose to stay and get the program to this level. To me, that speaks volumes," Johnson said. "Hopefully we can feed off that energy and make a statement in the OVC."

Allan Lewis can be reached at alewis@alestlelive.com or 650-3524.

XFEST from pg.5

audience will watch as three non-traditional clowns construct Dr. Frankenstein's lab, borrowing images and scenes from the classic novel and various Hollywood versions.

Audience involvement is encouraged, but Harper does not want it to deter people from attending.

"[Audience members] will not be pulled onto stage and be made fun of," Harper said.

Another way to interact with the actors is to attend the two workshops that are also being presented at Xfest 2.0.

"Participants will come away with a great experience," Cocuzza said.

The workshops include mime and puppetry taught by Frederico Restrepo and Loco7 for ages 8-12 on June 4 from 11 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

"Risk and Play" is a workshop taught by 500 Clown for ages 16 and older on June 4 from 1 to 3 p.m.

After the workshops on Saturday, Xfest 2.0 audience members will hear from keynote

speaker Joan Schirle, founding artistic director of Dell'Arte International and Director of Dell'Arte International School of Physical Theatre, in the Metcalf Theater from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

The topic of the speech is "Devised Performance in Contemporary American Theatre."

Following the keynote speaker, there will be a roundtable discussion with panelists to further discuss the topic of alternative theater.

Harper said the addition of speaker and a discussion are to benefit community members who do not know much about theater. The goal is to help the audience understand how the shows work. After every show, the actors also do a "talk-back" to further the audience's understanding.

"The performers come out and people can ask questions," Harper said. "It was very successful last year at Xfest. People were engaged and they were asking smart questions. I hope it happens again."

Everyone putting time and effort into Xfest 2.0 hopes to continue to make the festival bigger and better every year.

"We hope it's so unique that we put SIUE on the national radar in some way, shape or form," Cocuzza said.

Xfest 2.0 is made possible because of funding from a variety of sources including the Theater and Dance Department, the College of Arts and Sciences, the city of Edwardsville, Summer Arts Fund at SIUE and SIUE Arts and Issues series, which is the biggest supporter.

Complimentary tickets are offered to students enrolled in six credit hours during the summer, and are \$13 for students otherwise. The cost for SIUE staff, retirees, alumni and seniors 65 and older are \$25, and all others are \$28. The costs listed are per performance. Call the box office at 618-650-2774 to purchase tickets.

Lexi Cortes can be reached at acortes@alestlelive.com or 650-3527.

CTC from pg.5

Despite the fact that the production was a brief lesson in life values, "Aesop's Fables" was more importantly a fable in itself, a tale of acceptance and self-worth. It also poked fun at itself, and its production values were simplistic, though original through character dialogue and actions; something that audiences of all ages could appreciate.

"Aesop's Fables" is a short and sweet treat for

children, teens and even adults.

For more information on the Cougar Theater Company, visit <http://www.siue.edu/artsandsciences/theater/>

Courtney Hill can be reached at chill@alestlelive.com or 650-3527.

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